

has shown dedication and professionalism in her efforts to free and secure Iraq.

Army PFC Emily S. Pettigrew has been awarded the Army Commendation Medal for her continuing support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. This Medal of Honor is awarded to those in the Army who have distinguished themselves through exemplary service and meritorious achievement. Important objectives of the mission include, but are not limited to, peacekeeping, security, support, force protection and acquiescence throughout the strenuous transition process of the Iraqi Government.

Emily Pettigrew is the daughter of Richard and Dottie Pettigrew, residents of Country Hill, Keller, Texas, in the heart of my congressional district. As a soldier in Iraq, Army PFC Emily S. Pettigrew serves as a member of the Fires Brigade, 4th Infantry Division stationed at Camp Liberty. While in Iraq, the 4th Infantry Division from Fort Hood advances operating bases and performs duties at numerous camps. Combat missions assigned to the Fires Brigade have been completed successfully on account of the soldiers' devotion, altruism, and commitment to our country.

It is with great honor that I stand here today to recognize Army PFC Emily S. Pettigrew as a truly generous and outstanding individual, not only in the eyes of her family and friends in Keller, Texas, but also in the heart of this nation. I am proud to represent her and her family.

RECOGNIZING CENTENARIAN JOSEPH MENNELLA OF HERNANDO COUNTY, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Joseph Mennella of Hernando County, Florida. Joseph has done something that all of us strive to do, but that very few of us will ever accomplish, celebrate his 100th birthday.

Born September 2, 1906 in the "Little Italy" section of New York City, New York, Joseph lived and worked there for many years before moving to Florida in 1991. Joseph has fond memories of attending school as a child, although he readily admits that not everyone else agrees with him on that issue.

When he was young, Joseph was very ill and taken to the hospital. While recuperating, he was cared for by an Italian immigrant nurse named Mother Cabrini. Mother Cabrini later was canonized as the well-known St. Cabrini of today. In 1918, Joseph and his mother came down with the Spanish influenza, which killed 53 million people throughout the world, including approximately five thousand in New York. Joseph gives credit for his long life to those tough experiences as a child growing up in New York City.

Completing his formal education at the sixth grade level, Joseph went to work as a plaster contractor, and eventually opened a wheels and rims business that he ran for more than fifty years. Given his background, Joseph's advice to young people is to, "get an education." Following his marriage to Josephine in 1929, the happy couple was blessed with two healthy sons and two grandchildren.

In 1991, at the age of eighty-five, Joseph moved to Hernando County and built his own home that he still lives in today. He says he loves Hernando County because of the warm weather and sunshine. His goal now is to live to be 110, and says that "if he doesn't make it, then sue me."

Asked about the proudest moment in his life, Joseph recounts that reaching 100 years old and having the St. Petersburg Times do a front-page story on him was his best experience. Joseph enjoys reading the newspaper, and says that he would not change a thing if he had the chance to do his life over.

Madam Speaker, I ask that you join me in honoring Joseph Mennella for reaching his 100th birthday. I hope we all have the good fortune to live as long as him.

IN MEMORY OF REV. DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

HON. KENDRICK B. MEEK

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Madam Speaker, Dr. King brought the civil rights movement to every living room in this country. He marched for freedom in the face of unspeakable racial prejudice, yet preached a message of non-violence, civility and tolerance. It took Dr. King's forceful movement and powerful words to bring about real and lasting change to this country.

This will be the first Martin Luther King, Jr. Day since the passing of Dr. King's wife, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, a legendary civil rights advocate who's memory we honored at a community wide march last year in Miami. During a time of national grief and unrest following Dr. King's assassination, she became a symbol of her husband's struggle for peace and unity. On this day, we also honor this wonderful matriarchal figure, a role model who helped lead the struggle for equality.

Minority communities face obstacles every day—poverty, unemployment, lack of healthcare, and access to housing. It is a tragic waste that 1 in 5 children live in poverty, including more than one-third of African American children.

Dr. King paved the way for so many people, including me, to assume roles of influence in this country. And for all this work, he created a more just society and made this country an even better place to live. On this day, let us work even harder toward fulfilling Dr. King's legacy of public service.

IN RECOGNITION OF DOLORES "DEE" BENSON

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and accomplishments of Dee Benson, whose fierce dedication to family, friends, faith and community serves as a model for all who have been blessed by her presence.

Born in Altoona, Pennsylvania to Edward and Maggie Heintel, Dee demonstrated her

strength and determination from an early age. When she was only a year old, Dee wandered on to a scorching floor grate that severely burned her feet; pneumonia set in during her bed rest. With the support of friends, family and many faiths, Dee recovered and went about dedicating her life to the forces that helped her preserve it.

In 1945, fate introduced Dee to Private Bud Benson, and a year and a half courtship culminated in their 1947 marriage. Dee and Bud moved to Cleveland, Ohio to put down roots and start a family, giving birth to Robert, Patrick, Jacqueline, Mary, Elizabeth, Denise and Christine. Dee never wavered from her family, in fact she redoubled her efforts in the most trying times. During Bud's battle with health problems, she never left his side; when her granddaughter needed open-heart surgery, Dee kept vigil by her side.

Dee's generosity of spirit extended to her friends and the larger community as well. Dee has never passed up an opportunity to help a friend or even a complete stranger. All the while, Dee has sustained herself with the abiding commitment to faith that delivered her from her early challenges. When her sons served in Vietnam, prayer supported her; when she herself battled health problems later in life, faith carried her through. She even helped found Saint Anthony of Padua Parish.

Moreover, Dee has committed herself to civic engagement and community empowerment, embodying the ethic that "all politics is local." Dee has served as precinct committee-woman and has held numerous leadership positions in Democratic institutions throughout Northeast Ohio.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, please join me in honoring Dee Benson, whose generosity, kindness and vitality have and will continue to inspire all who cross paths with her.

HONORING THE LIFE OF TROOPER CALVIN W. JENKS

HON. LINCOLN DAVIS

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 12, 2007

Mr. LINCOLN DAVIS. Madam Speaker, earlier this week Tennessee lost one of its bright, honorable young men in a senseless tragedy. I rise today to honor the name and spirit of Tennessee Highway Patrol Trooper Calvin W. Jenks. Mr. Jenks of Culleoka, Tennessee was taken from his family, friends, and the countless Tennesseans he swore to protect during a traffic stop in West Tennessee. I don't want to dwell on the tragic event; instead I want to honor the life of a man who loved serving the public.

Trooper Jenks, a native of Lansing, Michigan, moved to the Culleoka Community in Maury County, south of Nashville, in 1989. A 2000 graduate of Culleoka High School, he excelled in baseball as a four year starter for the Culleoka Warriors baseball team.

A member of the Tennessee Highway Patrol for two years, his duties began in the 7th District of the Tennessee Highway Patrol, headquartered in Lawrenceburg. In July 2006 he transferred to the 4th District in Memphis.

Many friends and family members say Jenks, a newlywed, was a man of values and

with the skills to guide him through the ranks of the Tennessee Highway Patrol. As a testament to this young man's character over 1,110 people attended his funeral service.

Through this senseless tragedy, I hope the people of Tennessee will reflect on how much we actually owe the law enforcement officers who risk everything for the sake of protecting us. I will continue praying for their safety and that of their loved ones.

At this difficult time I doubt many words will comfort his wife, mother, father, brothers, sister and extended family during this time of profound loss. They should know that the State of Tennessee is deeply saddened by their loss and will forever appreciate Trooper Jenks's service. As Horatio said in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

MOURNING THE PASSING OF PRESIDENT GERALD RUDOLPH FORD

SPEECH OF

HON. JUANITA MILLENDER-McDONALD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Ms. MILLENDER-McDONALD. Madam Speaker, last week, Congress received the body of the late President Gerald Rudolph Ford, our 38th President, to lie in State in the Rotunda. He was the second President for whom I felt such an endearment that it felt as if I'd lost a friend.

I first met President Ford along with President Carter several years ago when I called on both men to support legislation I had introduced to give those who had been incarcerated, paid their debt to society, and had become productive citizens a restoration of their voting rights. In speaking with him, I found him to be very sensitive and understanding of that important issue. He said that it was the decent thing to do and signed a letter (along with President Carter and myself) asking President George W. Bush to submit a proclamation to all States to ensure these citizens' voting rights.

Two years later, I had the opportunity to meet with him and his beloved wife, Betty, at Rancho Mirage along with Governor Schwarzenegger and others to discuss federal legislation for California. We continued our discussion on voting rights, and I became further impressed with his modesty despite the fact that he had served at the highest level in this country.

Gerald R. Ford was a man of character and integrity, with many accomplishments to his credit. He was a Boy Scout, and the only President who has ever attained the rank of Eagle Scout. He was a football star for the University of Michigan where he majored in political science and economics while leading his team to two national titles. He studied at Yale Law School and opened his own law practice in Grand Rapids, Michigan before joining the Navy where he served as an officer during World War II and earned several medals.

In 1948, Gerald R. Ford was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives where he served until 1973. He was the Republican Mi-

nority Leader from 1965–1973. During his years in the House, Ford was, as the *New York Times* described, "a negotiator and a reconciler." On October 12, 1973, Ford was appointed Vice President of the United States after Spiro Agnew resigned. He became President after the resignation of Richard Nixon on August 9, 1974. President Gerald R. Ford is the only person to ever serve as both Vice President and President without being elected to either office.

As President, one of Ford's first actions was to pardon President Nixon, allowing the nation to heal and move on. Although this action was highly criticized at the time and may have cost him the election in 1976, it helped to restore Americans' faith in the office of the President. President Ford successfully addressed high inflation and unemployment while ending American involvement in Vietnam and pursuing international human rights through the Helsinki Accords, helping end the Cold War.

President Ford's legacy extends far beyond his accomplishments, however. More than anything else, President Gerald R. Ford will be remembered for his character, integrity, and humility. Gerald R. Ford was a very decent and humble human being. As Americans, we mourn more than the loss of a former President—we mourn the loss of a truly great American.

IMPLEMENTING THE 9/11 COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 9, 2007

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1 which will carry out the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission.

In 2002, Congress passed and funded a distinguished bipartisan panel to investigate and report on the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on our country. In spite of the urgency and critical nature of the panel's report and recommendations, the Bush administration and the Republican-led Congress failed to implement key recommendations that would improve the defense of our Nation such as enhancing homeland security and developing strategies to prevent the spread of Islamic terrorism and the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists.

Putting into action only a few of the Commission's carefully thought out recommendations did only half the job. And we all know that protecting America is a full-time job requiring full-time vigilance and full-time protection. This is especially true in today's post-9/11 world.

For the past 4 years, I have had the privilege of serving on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. As a member of that subcommittee, I heard testimony and attended briefings from officials at the Department of Homeland Security that brought to light the shortcomings of this Department and its failure to meet its mandate to secure our borders and protect our country. The then Chairman of the committee even withheld funding due to the Department's unresponsiveness and apparent lack of urgency about its mission.

Mr. Speaker, protecting our country must be our government's number one priority. If that mission lacks urgency by the very agency created to protect us, we will continue to remain dangerously vulnerable to those who would harm us.

I believe that putting into action all of the Commission's recommendations is urgently needed to help protect our country against a terrorist attack. And under our new Democratic leadership, which will be vigilant in its oversight and in holding the administration accountable, I am confident Democrats will push this agency beyond its bureaucratic lethargy to take the steps necessary to secure our homeland and protect our fellow Americans.

While I endorse the entire package of recommendations in the bill under consideration, I am particularly pleased to note that it includes several of the issues I addressed in hearings before the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee. These issues are critically important to our Nation and the communities I represent in Los Angeles.

First among them is interoperable communications. Our country lost many heroic first responders on that fateful September morning because they were unable to receive the message to evacuate the Twin Towers. Incredibly, 5 years after 9/11, this serious problem of interoperable communications continues to plague our emergency responders. This is particularly true for first responders in districts like mine, where various communities are covered by multiple jurisdictions of police, sheriff, and fire departments.

I am very pleased that included in this bill is the 9/11 Commission's recommendation to create a grant program for interoperable communications with a dedicated stream of funding. This will greatly enhance the ability of our first responders to close this critically serious communications gap.

Another issue of great concern to my constituents is currently being addressed at Los Angeles world airports. It is the installation of in-line detection systems for checked baggage on commercial airliners. The Commission's recommendations in this bill call for accelerating the installation of in-line explosive detection systems at all major airports.

The cargo hold of airplanes, filled with baggage, has often been called the "soft underbelly" of our aviation transportation system. By placing state of the art detection systems in our Nation's airport, we will harden that vulnerable soft spot and protect the flying public. And by consolidating the handling of baggage and screening equipment we will accelerate the movement of goods, passengers, and cargo.

In committee I have also consistently raised my concerns about the security of cargo containers entering ports such as the Ports of Los Angeles-Long Beach. I am very pleased that this bill goes beyond the Commission's recommendations by requiring, within 5 years, 100 percent scanning of U.S.-bound shipping containers.

We are very fortunate there has not been a port-centered attack on our Nation. As we saw during the 2002 labor dispute that closed the Ports of LA-Long Beach and cost the national economy \$1 billion per day, any long term disruption of our national maritime trade would have a devastating effect on our Nation's economy as well as the rest of the world.